House to study JFK, King slayings

By Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The House has voted to launch new investigations into the assassinations of President John F. Kennedy and civil rights leader Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

It adopted, by a vote of 280 to 65 Friday, a resolution to set up a special investigating committee. Sponsors said information points to a conspiracy in the Kennedy case and to the possible involvement of more than one person in the King shooting.

"IN THE CASE of President Kennedy I am convinced there was a conspiracy involved," Rep. Thomas N. Downing, D-Va., told the House. "I do not know the identity of the conspirators or their motives. That should be investigated in depth."

Earlier, Speaker Carl Albert said he is naming Downing chairman of the 12-member select committee and Rep. Henry B. Gonzalez, D-Tex., as next-ranking Democrat. Both have long been active in efforts to reopen the assassination cases.

Downing is retiring at the end of this year and Gonzalez would presumably succeed him as chairman if, as is expected, the inquiry is renewed in the new Congress. Downing said a staff will be gathered and preliminary inquiries made the rest of this year.

DELEGATE WALTER Fauntroy of the District of Columbia said "new information justifies this investigation" of the King death. Fauntroy was Washington director of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference when Dr. King headed the organization.

"The shameful conduct of the FBI with respect to Martin Luther King is enough to convince us of the need for additional investigation," he said. "The King assassination has never been investigated thoroughly. There was never a trial."

There was little opposition expressed in debate on the resolution, but Rep. B. F. Sisk, D-Calif., argued it could accomplish little.

"For God's sake, if you have any respect for the dollars of taxpayers, let's vote this resolution down," Sisk said.

"TO ME, IT IS almost unbelievable that we should be here, close to October, even discussing this issue. People are running around just plain witch hunting."

A spokesman for Downing estimated the inquiry would cost from $200,000 to $250,000 for the rest of the year. The House must approve money for the investigation separately.

Downing said it would be kept rigorously nonpartisan.

St Louis Globe Democrat?